

I first started working on Web projects for the Orthodox Christian Network (myocn.net) in late 2006. At the time, OCN had one program –

Come Receive the Light

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was primarily a traditional radio broadcast, airing in many key markets once a week. OCN's Website was important, but had always been considered a secondary delivery channel compared to terrestrial radio.

But things were changing, and Father Chris Metropulos (OCN's founder and chief voice) had already seen the handwriting on the wall for traditional radio. The Web was going to grow increasingly important in terms of Orthodox Evangelism and education, and older media forms would continue to fade. Instead of being shackled to their radios waiting for a program to air, people wanted programming on demand. So Father Chris went through the tough process of building the Orthodox Christian Network from one program airing once a week, into a driving force that is revolutionizing Orthodox Media in North America. As someone on the inside, what do I think OCN is doing that is so new?

Quite a number of things, actually.

Innovative Orthodox Podcasts

[Come Receive the Light](#) is still the flagship program of the Orthodox Christian Network. As he has done for over a decade, Father Chris Metropulos weekly interviews some of the most important people in Orthodoxy about a wide variety of topics. But this program has been joined now by 18 other Orthodox Christian podcasts, which cover topics as diverse as the early Christian communities in the Roman Empire to the Book of Revelations to understanding the Divine Liturgy to analyzing current events with noted conservative columnist Rod Dreher. New podcasts are being added all the time, including one starting Summer 2009 focused on Orthodox parenting. (That is one I really need with two kids under 10!)

OCN has focused on providing outstanding programming that meets the needs of today's Orthodox Christians. These needs include not only hearing the words of the Church Fathers, but also understanding how their teaching applies in today's cultural context.

Wide Variety of Orthodox Podcast Contributors

One of the most popular podcasts on the Orthodox Christian Network is [Journeys to Orthodoxy](#), which chronicles how people from different backgrounds found the Orthodox faith. This podcast is hosted by Jacob Lee. Jacob isn't a priest, but is a layman who runs a Web design firm. A lot of our contributors are priests like Father Chris, or Father David Smith, who explains Orthodox Theology in the context of great sermons on the [Harmony of Thunder](#) Orthodox podcast. But quite a number of our Orthodox contributors actually aren't priests. Many of our contributors are scholars with specialties in Theology, Church history, or patristics.

This diversity of talent adds a vital dynamic to OCN's programming line-up. While the faith is the same for all, the way the faith is communicated varies depending on the point-of-view of the podcast author. By having a variety of contributors with different backgrounds, OCN guarantees that every Orthodox Christian will find what they are looking for in our programming.

Live Coverage of Orthodox Events

OCN is not alone in offering Orthodox Christian podcasts. Lots of other media ministries do that, but OCN is absolutely unique in offering live coverage of a variety of Orthodox events around the world. OCN sent staff photographer Cameron Thorp to cover Metropolitan Jonah's consecration as a bishop in Dallas, and also his enthronement as Metropolitan of the OCA. Cameron's albums, published in the [OCN photo gallery](#), were filled with some of the most stunning Orthodox photographs on the Internet.

And that was just the beginning. Just a few months ago, Father Chris inaugurated the first ever Orthodox Travel Blog on OCN. Father Chris took a group of college students (and staff photographer Cameron) on [Real Break ’09 to Constantinople](#). The college students were from the Orthodox Christian Fellowship, and were there to restore a Christian cemetery that had been vandalized by the Turks over the course of centuries. An OCN travel blog combines live blogging, interviews, audio clips, and visually stunning, professional photography.

But as I said, that was only the beginning. Jacob Lee did a travel blog dedicated to his experience of [Holy Week in Cyprus](#). Father Chris led a team to cover the dedication of the

new [Orthodox Christian Mission Center](#) building in St. Augustine.

Right now, Father Chris and team are in Greece blogging and photographing the [Hellenic Dance Festival](#)

. Lots of Websites print Orthodox news grabbed from news agencies like Reuters or AP. OCN actually covers real Orthodox events with audio clips, photos, and articles. This ability to go where the news is, and report it live, is revolutionizing Orthodoxy in North America.

The Orthodox Christian Network is Really Pan-Orthodox.

If I had a penny for every pixel on the Internet dedicated to waxing on about Orthodox unity, then I'd be richer than Bill Gates. Whole Websites are devoted to fostering Orthodox Unity. It is a constant refrain in some quarters.

OCN does more than talk about Orthodox unity as a goal. OCN is actually making pan-Orthodox unity a *reality*. Father Chris Metropoulos, the Executive Director of the OCN, is a priest in the Greek Archdiocese. Father Spiro, who does most of our audio file editing, is also. The OCN is headquartered at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Ft. Lauderdale, and gets to use that beautiful facility for producing programming.

The artistic director, Cameron Thorp, belongs to the OCA. As do I, the primary Webmaster, and so does the Development Director, Tom Richter. *Journeys To Orthodoxy* host and Web team member, Jacob Lee, has a background in the Antiochian Archdiocese.

Our contributors run the gamut with most Orthodox ecclesiastical presences represented. Among those active in bringing Orthodox programming to you, we have cradles, converts of different backgrounds, lay, ordained, professors, pastors, techies, writers, radio professionals, and even professional moms. The perspectives on OCN are the broadest you will find anywhere within the Orthodox world. Which, frankly, just makes it so much easier to show people how truly universal the Orthodox faith really is.

Live Radio – Two Channels Worth

OCN also offers two different radio channels. [The Ark](#) plays contemporary music interspersed with our podcasts. [The Rudder](#) plays traditional Orthodox Chant of all kinds, again with podcasts mixed in.

Why do we have a contemporary channel? Because OCN is at the forefront of helping to create contemporary Orthodox music as a genre. There are artists out there that meld traditional Orthodox themes with modern music. The Ark is instrumental in building up that community of people who can help reach a wider audience for the truth of Orthodoxy. The programming for the Ark is being done by [Ron Moore](#) – who actually coined the term Contemporary Christian Music. This is clearly a space that Orthodoxy needs to be in, and the Orthodox Christian Network is making it happen.

And, of course, The Rudder, programmed by [Dr. Vlad Morosan](#) of [Music Russica](#), is just plain beautiful. I tune in when my customer base is really getting on my nerves. Nothing like calming hymns to the Theotokos coming through my headphones to help get through another day of being an IT resource in a faltering economy.

OCN is on a course that is totally changing the face of Orthodox Media. That's why I'm on-board as a Web designer, and that's why so many other volunteers are signing up to help make a difference as well. This is a whole new world for an ancient faith, and the vision of Father Chris Metropulos is helping to bring truth to an America that badly needs it!